

Merit Review Worksheet for Office of Air and Radiation Applications for New and Supplemental Awards

CAA Section 105 State, Local, and Tribal Grant Workplans (66.001)

State Indoor Radon Grant Workplans (66.032)

Ozone Transport Commission Grant Workplans (66.033)

Non-Competitive CAA Section 103 Grant Workplans (66.034; 66.038; 66.042)

Instructions:

Effective Date: November 12, 2020

Last Updated: March 19, 2021¹

Requirement (2 CFR § 200.205): Every application for a new discretionary noncompetitive assistance agreement, and applications for supplemental funding amendments as discussed below, awarded in the Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) are subject to a merit review.

Applicability: Project Officers are required to complete merit reviews for the following OAR grant programs:

- 66.001 – Air Pollution Control Program Support (Clean Air Act (CAA) Section 105 grants)
- 66.032 – State Indoor Radon Grants
- 66.033 – Ozone Transport Commission
- 66.034 – Studies, Research, Investigations, Demonstration and Special Purpose Activities Related to the CAA. Non-competitive grants under this assistance listing only:
 - PM_{2.5} grants
 - NATTS grants
 - Multijurisdictional organization grants
- 66.038 – Trainings, Investigations, and Special Purpose Activities of Federally Recognized Tribes Consistent with the CAA. Non-competitive grants under this assistance listing only:
 - Non-competitive CAA Section 103 grants
- 66.042 – Temporally Integrated Monitoring of Ecosystems and Long-Term Monitoring Program
- Performance Partnership Grants (PPGs): The work plan/tasks for any CAA 105 and SIRG funds that are included in a PPG must undergo a merit review. CAA 105 and SIRG programmatic contacts responsible for the work plan review should acknowledge their review and communicate their approval to the PPG Project Officer.

Merit Review Checklist: The merit review checklist contains all the information required to meet the 2 CFR § 200.205 merit review requirements. Project Officers should complete all questions in the checklist. In addition to the Yes/No responses, all questions must include a narrative response/justification. **NOTE: For Section V., only answer the sub-question that applies to the grant under review.**

Merit Review Verification: Project Officers performing the merit review should sign and date the bottom of the form. Typing in the Project Officer name will be considered equivalent to signing the form.

Merit Review Documentation: The completed, signed merit review form should be attached to Section M of the Funding Recommendation and included in the grant file. Regions should contact their Grants Office to determine if there are region-specific requirements.

Region-Specific Forms: Regions may continue to use or modify region-specific technical review forms. However, the region-specific forms must include all the Merit Review Checklist questions and narrative on this form. Regions should provide a copy of the region-specific forms to their National Program Manager for review.

¹ This checklist was developed to comply with the new merit requirements for non-competitive grant applications under 2 CFR 200/Uniform Grant Guidance. The Office of Air and Radiation periodically reviews the merit review process. This Merit Review Worksheet is effective as of this date and will be reviewed every 5 years.

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Name of Grantee:	Grant Number:
Project Officer:	Budget/Project Periods:
Assistance Listing:	Statutory Authority:
Grant Title:	

Work Plan Requirements (40 CFR §35.111 and 35.511(a)(3) and §35.107 and 35.507): OAR has determined that all applicable grant programs are subject to the criteria set forth in these regulations for the purposes of Merit Review.

I. Type of Award

Application for New Funding	Application for Supplemental Funding		
<i>If this is a new Grant, complete the remainder of the review form.</i>	If this is an application for supplemental funding, answer the following questions:	Yes	No
	a. Are the activities to be performed under the supplemental funding application significantly different from the activities in the underlying grant?		
	b. Have there been any significant issues with the grantee's performance and reporting so far under the grant (e.g., is the grantee efficiently and effectively performing the grant) such that there are concerns regarding whether the grantee can successfully achieve the program objectives for the grant?		
<p><i>If the application is for supplemental funding, and you answered "No" for a. and b., then sign and date the form and you do not need to complete the rest of this Merit Review form. And, the Project Officer should include the following statement in Section M. of the funding recommendation:</i></p> <p><i>"The program office has determined that a merit review is not required for the application for this supplemental funding action because: (1) The activities to be performed under the application are not significantly different from the activities in the underlying assistance agreement and (2) There are no significant issues with the grantee's performance and reporting to date under the assistance agreement."</i></p> <p><i>If you answered "yes" to either "a" or "b" above, then complete the remainder of this form.</i></p>			

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II. Basis for negotiating work plans

	Yes	No	Comments
40 CFR 107(a) or 40 CFR 507(a)			
Does the work plan consider such factors as the most recent national program guidance; any regional supplemental guidance; goals, objectives, and priorities proposed by the applicant; other jointly identified needs or priorities; and the planning target?			
Does the application meet the requirements of all applicable federal statutes; regulations; circulars; executive orders; and delegations, approvals, or authorizations?			
<i>Note: If the work plan differs significantly from the goals and objectives, priorities, or performance measures in the national program guidance associated with the proposed work plan activities, the Regional Administrator must consult with the National Program Manager before agreeing to the work plan.</i>			

III. Work Plan Requirements

	Yes	No	Comments
40 CFR 107(b) or 40 CFR 507(b)			
Does the work plan specify:			
a. The work plan outputs and outcomes to be funded under the grant			
b. The estimated work years and estimated funding amounts for each work plan component			
c. A time frame for the accomplishment of each output and outcome in the work plan			
d. A performance evaluation process and performance reporting schedule that is annually at a minimum			
e. The roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA in carrying out the work plan commitments			
40 CFR 35.111(a) or 40 CFR 35.511(a)			
The achievement of the proposed work plan is feasible, considering such factors as:			
a. The applicant's existing circumstances			
b. Past performance	NA		
c. Program authority			
d. Organization			
e. Resources			
f. Procedures			

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IV. Factors Considered in Determining Award Amount

	Yes	No	Comments
40 CFR 35.112(a) or 40 CFR 35.512(a)			
Which factors were considered when determining the amount of funds to be awarded?			
a. Applicant's allotment			
b. The extent to which the proposed work plan is consistent with EPA guidance and mutually agreed upon priorities			
c. Anticipated cost of the work plan relative to the proposed work plan outputs and outcomes			

V. Review of Merit of Proposal (2 CFR §200.205)

Based on Questions II. – IV. above, the applicant is most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the applicable program's objectives.

Directions: Select the applicable grant program for this Merit Review

Assistance Listing	Program Description – is the applicants most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the applicable program's objectives?	Yes	No	Comments
66.001	Air Pollution Control Grants are awarded to State, local, interstate, or intermunicipal air pollution control agencies (as defined in Section 302(b) of the CAA) to administer programs that prevent and control air pollution or implement national ambient air quality standards.			
66.032	State Indoor Radon Grants assist states and federally recognized tribes (including the District of Columbia and territories) to provide radon risk reduction through activities that will result in increased radon testing, mitigation, and radon resistant new construction through the authorizing statute: Title III of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), the Indoor Radon Abatement Act (IRAA), Section 306. States and tribes are encouraged to implement projects focused on assisting state radon programs, addressing low-income population exposure, expanding radon testing of existing homes, increasing mitigation of homes with high radon levels, and promoting radon-resistant new construction.			

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Assistance Listing	Program Description – is the applicants most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the applicable program’s objectives?	Yes	No	Comments
66.033	The overall goal of the Ozone Transport Commission (OTC) grant is to facilitate collaboration among the OTC jurisdictions, notably the State Environmental Commissioners/Secretaries, State Air Directors and their staff, to assist them in reducing ozone precursor emissions in their states and in representing their ozone related issues to the EPA. EPA awards grants to the Commission under the authority of Section 106 of the CAA. Section 184 of the CAA established the Ozone Transport Region (OTR) that, by law, develops and recommends regional strategies for cleaning up air pollution.			
66.034	Grants supporting Surveys, Studies, Research, Investigations, Demonstrations and Special Purpose assistance relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, and control of air pollution to include such topics as air quality, acid deposition, global programs, indoor environments, radiation, mobile source technology and community-driven approaches to transportation and emissions reduction. <i>NOTE: This merit review is only applicable to non-competitive grants under this assistance listing. Identify the grant program in the comments box.</i>			
66.038	To support Federally-recognized Indian tribes' efforts to understand, assess and characterize air quality; design methods and plans to protect and improve air quality on tribal lands through surveys, studies, research, training, investigations, and special purpose activities. To ensure tribes have appropriate levels of support and opportunity to understand their air quality and take proactive measures to preserve, restore and protect air quality for their reservations and other lands over which they have jurisdiction through tribal program implementation, CAA implementation, radiation protection, mobile source controls, and voluntary programs to address outdoor and indoor air and other concerns. To ensure that all tribes have the tools they need to understand and participate in local, regional and national issues, regulatory and policy developments, and to protect their air quality from activities off the reservation that may affect or impact them. <i>NOTE: This merit review is only applicable to non-competitive CAA 103 tribal grants under this assistance listing.</i>			

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Assistance Listing	Program Description – is the applicants most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the applicable program’s objectives?	Yes	No	Comments
66.042	Temporally Integrated Monitoring of Ecosystems and Long-Term Monitoring cooperative agreements to study the ecological response to pollution reduction and emissions control programs. The programs will assist in understanding biogeochemical changes in sulfur, nitrogen, aluminum, and carbon in streams and lakes in relation to changing pollutant emissions and deposition, as well as other factors, such as potential environmental changes (e.g., temperature, precipitation, and storm frequency and intensity). Clean Air Act section 103(b)(3) authorizes EPA to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention and control of air pollution.			

Reviewer Signature

Date